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Chair: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 136: Improving the financial situation of the United Nations (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), accompanying his statement* with a digital slide presentation, said that he would focus on four main financial indicators: assessments issued, unpaid assessed contributions, available cash resources and outstanding payments to Member States in respect of three budget categories: the regular budget, peacekeeping and the international tribunals. Overall, those indicators remained generally sound and positive, although some areas would need to be closely monitored in 2017.

2. At the end of 2016, unpaid assessments had been lower than at the end of the previous year in all areas except peacekeeping. The increase in unpaid peacekeeping assessments in 2016 had been directly related to the increase in peacekeeping assessments in that year, as it had not been possible to issue half of the peacekeeping assessments for the 2015/16 fiscal year until after the adoption in December 2015 of the scale of assessments for the period from 2016 to 2018. Cash balances at the end of 2016 had been positive for peacekeeping and the tribunals, but the regular budget had continued to show a pattern of tightness in the final quarter.

3. At the end of April 2017, unpaid assessments had been lower than one year earlier in all categories. Cash balances were positive for all areas, but regular budget cash was expected to tighten again towards the end of the year.

4. With regard to troop costs and contingent-owned equipment, the level of outstanding payments to Member States had been lower at the end of 2016 than the previous year. The Secretariat would continue to make every effort to expedite outstanding payments to Member States in 2017.

5. Concerning the regular budget, assessments had been issued in 2017 at a level of $2.578 billion, $29 million higher than in 2016, and $1.6 billion in payments had been received by 30 April. Unpaid assessments had amounted to $1.4 billion as at 30 April 2016, $8 million lower than one year earlier. By the end of 2016, 145 Member States had paid their regular budget assessments in full, 3 more than in 2015. He urged the remaining Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full as soon as possible. Outstanding contributions had decreased significantly in the last quarter of 2016. They continued to be concentrated among a few Member States, whose actions in the months ahead would largely determine the final financial picture for 2017. He acknowledged that differences in the financial years of Member States and the timing of the related national legislative processes could affect prompt payment by some Member States. By 30 April 2017, 92 Member States had paid their assessments to the regular budget in full, 13 more than by 30 April 2016.

6. Cash resources available for the regular budget under the General Fund included the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account. The regular budget cash shortfalls in the last months of 2016 had been covered by the reserves and through cross-borrowing from other accounts. The final position as at 31 December 2016 had reflected a $123 million cash shortfall under the regular budget, which had been covered by the Working Capital Fund. Regular budget cash had increased to $632 million as a result of the contributions from Member States in the early months of 2017, but it would continue to face pressure given the current reduced level of reserves resulting from General Assembly decisions on the use of the Special Account, which was at a level of $200 million, while the level of the Working Capital Fund was authorized at $150 million, and from General Assembly action to finance a significant level of activities with commitment authority, without assessment, during the biennium 2016-2017. The final cash position at the end of 2017 would depend largely on payments from Member States in coming months.

7. Peacekeeping operations had a different financial period from the regular budget, and ran from 1 July to 30 June rather than the calendar year. Moreover, separate assessments were issued for each operation and, since assessments could only be issued for the mandate period authorized by the Security Council for each mission, they were issued for different periods throughout the year. All those factors complicated a comparison between budgets for peacekeeping operations and other budgets.

8. At the end of 2016, unpaid assessments for peacekeeping operations had totalled $1.8 billion, an increase of $826 million compared with the $976 million outstanding at the end of 2015. As at 30 April 2017, new assessments of $1.2 billion had been issued and the level of unpaid assessments had been reduced to under $1.7 billion. That amount included assessments of $396 million issued the previous week following the extension of the mandates of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

* Subsequently circulated as document A/71/440/Add.1.

(MONUSCO) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

9. As at 30 April 2017, unpaid assessments had continued to be concentrated among a few Member States, the result of differences in the financial years of Member States and the timing of the related national legislative processes. That was a particular challenge in respect of peacekeeping operations, as letters of assessment were issued throughout the year for different missions whenever the Security Council renewed the respective mandates. By 31 December 2016, 24 Member States had paid all peacekeeping assessments in full; a total of 48 Member States had done so by 30 April 2017.

10. Although the total cash available for peacekeeping, including the reserve, had amounted to $2.8 billion at the end of 2016, that amount was segregated in accordance with the decision of the Assembly to maintain separate accounts for each operation. The Assembly had specified that no peacekeeping mission should be financed by borrowing from other active peacekeeping missions. The use of the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund was restricted to new operations and expansions of existing operations. At the end of 2016, peacekeeping cash had consisted of approximately $2.5 billion in the accounts of active missions, $217 million in closed mission accounts, and $138 million in the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund.

11. With regard to outstanding payments to Member States, the total amount owed had decreased to $808 million at the end of 2016 from $824 million at the start of that year. The Secretariat would continue to accelerate payments and reduce the amount owed for troops, formed police units and contingent-owned equipment. The $777 million owed at 31 March 2017 comprised $225 million for troops and formed police units, $466 million for contingent-owned equipment claims for active missions and $86 million for such claims for closed missions. However, reimbursements would be kept current and the total amount owed was projected to decrease to $804 million at the end of 2017.

12. The Secretary-General was committed to meeting obligations to Member States providing troops and equipment as expeditiously as the cash situation permitted. The Secretariat monitored the peacekeeping cash flow situation constantly with a view to maximizing payments, but depended on Member States' meeting their financial obligations and on the expeditious finalization of memorandums of understanding with troop-contributing countries.

13. The financial position of the two international tribunals at the end of 2016 remained sound. The amount outstanding at the end of 2016 had decreased to $40 million from $65 million one year earlier. By the end of 2016, 116 Member States had paid their assessed contributions for the international tribunals in full, 9 more than a year earlier; other Member States were urged to follow their example. As at 30 April 2017, outstanding assessments had amounted to $91 million, with 64 Member States having paid their assessed contributions for both tribunals and the International Residual Mechanism in full, 12 more than a year earlier. The month-by-month position of cash balances for the tribunals had been positive in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Since 30 April 2017, two Member States had made payments in an amount of $6.9 million. Once again, the final outcome for 2017 would depend on Member States' continuing to honour their financial obligations for the tribunals.

14. In conclusion, he paid tribute to those Member States that had paid all assessments in full. The financial situation was generally sound, with increases in the number of Member States that had met their obligations in full in every category and a lower level of unpaid assessments in all categories than one year earlier. However, unpaid regular budget assessments continued to be highly concentrated and the final position of the regular budget for 2017 would depend on action by the remaining Member States. In recent years, the last quarter had continued to be difficult for regular budget cash. It had been necessary to draw significantly on the regular budget cash reserves, both the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account, during the final months of 2016. Those reserves had proved insufficient, and cross-borrowing from other accounts had been necessary. The time had come to review the level of reserves in the light of that experience.

15. While the overall United Nations cash situation was positive for all categories as at 30 April 2017, regular budget cash was expected to tighten again towards the end of the year. The Secretariat would continue to monitor the cash flow closely and ensure rigorous financial management. An increased number of Member States were making timely contributions to peacekeeping operations and the Secretariat was making every effort to expedite outstanding payments in respect of troops and formed police units, and contingent-owned equipment claims. As always, the financial health of the Organization depended on Member States' meeting their financial obligations in full and on time.

16. **Mr. Sánchez Azcuy** (Cuba) requested the Secretariat to include in future such presentations, information regarding the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account for at least the previous three budgets, to afford a better comparison of the tight situation of the regular budget in the last quarter. Such a comparison would forestall accusations from some delegations that the money in the Fund and the Account was lying idle. The Fund and the Account were used to resolve the cash situation of the Organization, which depended to a high degree on budgetary contributions from a single Member State that did not pay its contributions until the end of the year because of its internal political process. He sought clarification regarding the reasons for and the resolutions in accordance with which withdrawals had been made from the Special Account. His delegation objected to the use of the regular budget cash reserves, in particular the Special Account, to finance the recosting exercise and offset deficits in the capital master plan, which exceeded the remit of the Fund and the Account.

17. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management) said that the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account were essential to easing the cash flow situation of the regular budget. As a result of increases in the regular budget, the General Assembly had decided in 2006 to raise the Fund's level from $100 million to $150 million, but the budget had continued to increase since that time. The Assembly had subsequently decided to use the Special Account to help finance the 2012-2013 regular budget and the final shortfall under the capital master plan. As a result, the level of the Account had been reduced to approximately $200 million, and the Secretariat had appealed to the Member States not to exhaust the Account. The Committee might consider reviewing the level of the Fund and the Account, since the combined regular budget cash reserves of $350 million were enough to finance Secretariat cash expenditure for only six weeks.

Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/71/835 and A/71/836/Add.9)

Budget for the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018

18. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/835), said that, since its establishment in 2010 as a pillar of the global field support strategy, the Centre had been essential to the Secretariat's efforts to reduce costs for field missions and improve the effectiveness of operations. The implementation of Umoja had enabled the Centre to provide shared, transactional and non-location-dependent administrative services in the areas of human resources, finance, transportation and movement control to more than two thirds of the individual personnel deployed in peacekeeping and special political missions. Since the deployment of Umoja cluster 5, which had enabled automated payroll processing, the Centre had been providing payroll services to the missions in Africa that it had not previously supported, pending the General Assembly's decision on the global service delivery model. During the 2017/18 period, the Centre was expected to provide support for the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

19. The proposed 2017/18 budget amounted to $37.3 million, 5.0 per cent less than the approved 2016/17 budget. The Secretary-General proposed that, with effect from 1 July 2017, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) should be added to the Centre's portfolio of clients. Owing to the inclusion of MINURSO, the expansion of the Centre's client base and the temporary provision of payroll services to all missions in Africa, the Secretary-General proposed that 18 posts and positions should be established at the Centre.

20. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/836/Add.9), said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $3,771,200 in the proposed budget of the Regional Service Centre. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal that MINURSO should become a client of the Centre, the Advisory Committee recalled that the Secretary-General was to submit to the General Assembly at the main part of its seventy-second session a report on the global service delivery model. While the Advisory Committee did not object to the provision of payroll services for five additional missions as an interim arrangement to support the implementation of Umoja, changes to the service delivery model must be approved by the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 70/248 A.

21. The Advisory Committee did not object to the Secretary-General's proposal that the Centre's cross-functional service lines should be restructured on the basis of the categories of international staff, national

staff and uniformed personnel, and trusted that the restructuring would improve efficiency. The Secretary-General should refine the scalability model to include the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre and Regional Information and Communications Technology Services. Since the General Assembly had decided that the Centre should have operational and managerial independence and report directly to the Department of Field Support, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to refine the proposed governance arrangements and provide an update on the matter in his next report on the Centre.

22. The Advisory Committee recommended against the proposed establishment at the Centre of eight national General Service posts, in accordance with the recommendation, in its report on the budget performance for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 of MINURSO (A/71/836/Add.1), that the posts should be included in the budget for the Mission. It did not object to the transfer of two payroll-related posts from MINURSO to the Centre. It made recommendations related to post resources and operational costs.

23. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Centre had been established following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/269 to provide shared services to missions in the region under the global field support strategy. The Secretary-General had stated in his third annual progress report on the implementation of the strategy (A/67/633) that the core of the strategy was to capitalize on potential synergies and economies of scale to deliver better and timelier support and reduce or eliminate waste, duplication and bottlenecks in logistical, administrative and financial support services. The Group welcomed the support provided by the Centre to seven peacekeeping operations, six special political missions and the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU); the addition of MINURSO and other missions in the region to the portfolio of missions supported by the Centre; and the proposed restructuring of the Centre's cross-functional service lines to take advantage of Umoja. The Group would seek further information regarding the advantages of the restructuring in supporting peacekeeping missions in the region and the proposed staffing structure, which would involve the reassignment of posts.

24. More than 60 per cent of peacekeeping missions were in Africa and should be supported from a hub in the same time zone. Taking into account the number of civilian personnel in those missions, training should also be conducted in the region. The Group welcomed the hosting by the Regional Training and Conference Centre of events for United Nations field missions in the region, for staff from Headquarters and other United Nations entities. The Regional Training and Conference Centre should be managed under the administration of the Regional Service Centre. The Secretariat should take advantage of the low cost of hosting a support centre for missions in Africa. Since the smooth functioning of the Regional Service Centre depended on its governance structure, the Group would seek further information regarding the roles of the client board and the steering committee. The Group would seek to ensure that the support component for all peacekeeping missions, in particular the provision of administrative functions, was efficient and accountable.

25. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda) said that the global field support strategy was based on the principles that the Secretariat would provide strategic direction, exercise oversight and take policy decisions, but would not be involved in the business of operational and transactional service delivery; that global and regional service centres would take over most operational and transactional functions; and that the mission support component of field operations would be reduced, with only location-dependent activities performed in missions. Those principles were particularly relevant at a time when Member States, because of their own financial situations, were asking the Secretariat to do more with less. Her delegation would seek further information regarding the proposed governance structures at the Regional Service Centre. It supported the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the nationalization of posts at the Centre.

26. The principles of the global service delivery model were similar to those of the global field support strategy, and her delegation looked forward to seeing a cost-benefit analysis of the location of service centres. The General Assembly should consider the low cost of living and the family-friendly environment in Uganda, which would facilitate the work of peacekeeping staff. Her delegation welcomed the cooperation between the Secretariat and the Government of Uganda and pledged its support for United Nations programmes in the region.

Agenda item 156: Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (A/71/679, A/71/787 and A/71/836/Add.12)

Agenda item 157: Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (A/71/615, A/71/759, A/71/759/Corr.1, A/71/759/Corr.2 and A/71/836/Add.4)

Agenda item 163: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (A/71/642, A/71/775 and A/71/836/Add.7)

27. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/679) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/787) for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), said that the Secretary-General had proposed a budget amounting to $336.6 million for the full 2017/18 period. Since the publication of the related report (A/71/787) and its consideration by the Advisory Committee, the Security Council had decided, in its resolution 2350 (2017), to close MINUSTAH by 15 October 2017 and to establish a follow-on peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). She had subsequently written a letter to the Chair of the Advisory Committee informing that Committee of the Council's decision, its financial implications and the Secretariat's intentions in that connection.

28. In the light of the ongoing review of modalities for the closure of MINUSTAH and the transition to MINUJUSTH, the Secretariat had informed the Advisory Committee of an indicative requirement of $153.2 million for the interim six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2017, estimated on the basis of the information available at that time. A comprehensive assessment would be undertaken with a view to presenting the budget for MINUJUSTH for the period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018 for consideration by the General Assembly at the main part of its seventy-second session. The Secretariat would begin immediately to reduce MINUSTAH tasks in a phased manner, ensuring that critical functions were maintained, and MINUSTAH would prioritize efforts to ensure a successful transition to MINUJUSTH.

29. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/615) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/759, A/71/759/Corr.1 and A/71/759/Corr.2) for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), she said that a budget of $38.0 million was proposed for 2017/18, representing an increase of 4.2 per cent compared with the budget for 2016/17. UNMIK would continue to strengthen and consolidate peace, security, the rule of law and stability in Kosovo and the region, including by strengthening its role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Kosovo through active engagement with Kosovo institutions.

30. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/642) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/775) for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), she said that the proposed budget of $1,023.1 million for 2017/18 represented a 0.7 per cent decrease compared with the approved resources for 2016/17. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID would continue to transfer to the United Nations country team a number of tasks that were either no longer mandated or in which the country team had been identified as having a comparative advantage.

31. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MINUSTAH (A/71/836/Add.12), said that the Advisory Committee's comments on the letter from the Controller were contained in paragraph 17 of the report.

32. In view of the decision of the Security Council in its resolution 2350 (2017), and taking into account the comprehensive assessment being undertaken by the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $105,000,000, with assessment, for the maintenance of MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July to 15 October 2017. The Advisory Committee expected that updated information on the resource requirements for the Mission would be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the Committee's report (A/71/836/Add.12). The Advisory Committee's comments on the financing of MINUJUSTH were contained in paragraph 19 of its report.

33. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNMIK (A/71/836/Add.4), he said that it was a matter of concern that the cash position of the Mission did not cover the three-month operating cash reserve. The Advisory Committee recommended a number of reductions in the proposed requirements for consultancy and travel of staff and noted the status of vacant posts and positions in UNMIK. It also noted the efforts made by UNMIK to adjust the number of vehicles to the projected requirements for each

personnel category within the limits of the standard ratios. The Advisory Committee stressed the need for greater clarity with regard to redeployments of funds for use in programmatic and other activities within budgetary periods, underscoring that underexpenditures in the budget did not automatically justify the use of available funds for unbudgeted purposes.

34. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNAMID (A/71/836/Add.7), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended reductions amounting to approximately $15 million in the proposed budget for the Mission. Those reductions corresponded to the abolishment of seven posts proposed for reassignment and the application of higher vacancy rates than proposed. Further reductions were recommended in a number of categories, including consultancy, official travel, facilities and infrastructure, information technology, and communications. The Advisory Committee was concerned that UNAMID environmental efforts, in particular with respect to the generation of solar energy, remained mostly in the planning stages and expected that efforts would be strengthened in order to reduce the overall environmental footprint of UNAMID, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 69/307 and 70/286.

35. A joint African Union-United Nations report on the most recent strategic review of UNAMID would be submitted to the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council by May 2017. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would review the requirements of UNAMID in the light of any decisions taken by the Council following its consideration of the report, and, as appropriate, would present a revised budget for the requirements of the Mission.

36. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, as was reflected in the Secretary-General's overview report on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/71/809), total expenditure for peacekeeping operations for the 2015/16 period amounted to $8,017.4 million against an approved budget of $8,296.6 million, exclusive of budgeted voluntary contributions in kind. Financial resources for peacekeeping operations for the 2017/18 period were estimated at $7,971.6 million compared with the approved level of $7,888.9 million for the 2016/17 period, which represented a net increase of 1 per cent. The Group looked forward to consideration of the proposed budgets for each mission.

37. She recalled that, in General Assembly resolution 70/286, the Secretary-General had been requested to report on measures taken to expand the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. The Group looked forward to the finalization in 2017 of the comprehensive evaluation of measures taken to strengthen accountability for the integration of gender into mission mandate fulfilment and to provide strategic and technical support to all substantive components of missions, in line with the recommendations of the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

38. In its resolution 61/276, the General Assembly had affirmed the critical role of quick-impact projects in strengthening the link between missions and local populations, and, in its resolution 70/286, had requested the Secretary-General to enhance the impact of such projects while addressing underlying challenges. For the 2017/18 period, a budget of $18 million was proposed for the implementation of quick-impact projects across nine peacekeeping missions, compared with $20 million for the 2016/17 period, a difference that reflected the closing of UNOCI. The Group requested the Secretary-General to clarify the distinction between quick-impact projects and programmatic activities and to revisit the budget ceiling for quick-impact projects.

39. The Group took note of the triennial meeting of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment held in January 2017 and looked forward to informal consultations on the related agenda item. The issue of reducing the burden on troop- and police-contributing countries resulting from delays in reimbursements for contingent-owned equipment must also be addressed.

40. She recalled that the United Nations currently supported 17 active peacekeeping operations: 14 peacekeeping missions funded under individual special accounts and 3 peacekeeping missions funded under the programme budget: the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. The Security Council had mandated the withdrawal of UNOCI by 30 April 2017 and the withdrawal of UNMIL by 30 April 2018 in its resolutions 2284 (2016) and 2333 (2016), respectively. The overall proposed resource requirements for the 2017/18 period reflected cost reductions associated with the closing of UNOCI, the withdrawal of UNMIL and the reconfiguration and streamlining of operations in UNAMID, MINUSTAH and MONUSCO.

41. The Group trusted that further clarification would be provided with regard to the drawdown of MINUSTAH and the transition to MINUJUSTH, and that all relevant budgetary rules and procedures would be followed to enable an orderly transition that did not adversely affect mandate implementation on the ground.

42. The Group welcomed the progress made in strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, in particular the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017. It also looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on options for joint planning, mandating and financing of African Union peace support operations, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2320 (2016), and reiterated that assessed contributions were the most reliable and sustainable source of support for such operations.

43. With regard to MONUSCO, the Group welcomed the successful implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement signed on 31 December 2016 and noted that a strategic review of the Mission was expected by 30 September 2017. It trusted that any reductions in the military and civilian components of MONUSCO would take into account the need for effective mandate implementation and would be applied in consultation with the host Government and other stakeholders.

44. UNAMID was an innovative model of partnership between the United Nations and the African Union that had significantly contributed to supporting peace, national reconciliation and the protection of civilians in Darfur. The Group took note of the proposed budget for the mission for 2017/18, which would ensure that UNAMID had adequate resources to discharge its mandated objective of achieving a lasting political solution and sustained security in Darfur. The Group would closely examine the budget performance report for the Mission (A/71/642), particularly the information on the environmental impact of its activities and consistency in the recording of expenditure items. It would also seek further clarification regarding steps taken to transfer a number of the Mission's tasks to the United Nations country team, as well as details on the impact of community stabilization projects on local populations with a view to determining whether funding for such projects should be enhanced. Lastly, the Group would seek clarification regarding the rationale behind the changes proposed by the Secretary-General to the organizational structure of UNAMID and their impact on the work of the Mission.

45. **Mr. Funes Henríquez** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the Community reaffirmed its solidarity with Haiti and recognized the importance of international efforts to support the country's national priorities. The member countries of CELAC had demonstrated their commitment to placing the Haitian people on the path to stability, peace and development by contributing most of the military and police personnel to MINUSTAH and providing technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance and medical teams through bilateral channels, regional organizations and the United Nations system. They were proud of the Mission's work, particularly the exemplary operational performance of its military component. Noting the Security Council's decision to extend the Mission's mandate for a final period of six months and to establish a follow-on peacekeeping mission, she stressed that MINUJUSTH would receive the same support from CELAC that MINUSTAH had historically received.

46. The gains achieved by MINUSTAH, particularly in the area of security, must be protected, even as its functions were transferred to MINUJUSTH, the Government and the country team. The country's vulnerability to humanitarian crises, health problems and other social challenges highlighted the importance of the ongoing presence and involvement of the international community and the need to make it clear that the United Nations would continue to support Haiti. In that connection, discussions of the MINUSTAH budget should take into account the Mission's role in strengthening institutions, the rule of law, human rights and the security of personnel on the ground.

47. An adequate level of resources should be provided for programmatic activities in order to strengthen the peacebuilding agenda. Given their importance for fostering sustainable peace and security, community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects should be maintained by MINUJUSTH, in line with the priorities of the Government of Haiti. CELAC was in favour of the commitment authority recommended by the Advisory Committee for the maintenance of MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July to 15 October 2017 and looked forward to consideration of the budget for MINUJUSTH during the main part of the General Assembly's seventy-second session.

48. CELAC rejected arbitrary reductions in the Mission's resources without technical justification. The budgets of MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH, like those of other peacekeeping missions, should be based on

technical criteria, including the situation on the ground and the related Security Council mandates, rather than on artificial budget ceilings. He urged all Member States to continue to support reconstruction, stabilization and development efforts in Haiti.

49. **Ms. Barbosa Lima Côrtes** (Brazil) said that MINUSTAH had been a uniquely successful mission, having deployed more than 110,000 soldiers from Latin America and around the world to assist national authorities in ensuring a secure and stable environment for the Haitian people and supporting the country's reconstruction after natural disasters. For 13 years, Brazil had contributed troops and exercised military command over MINUSTAH. Countries in her region were proud of the contribution of the Mission's military component to the successful implementation of its mandate.

50. Throughout its deployment, MINUSTAH had been fully committed to implementing its mandate and had had no problems with undeclared caveats, lack of effective command and control, refusal to obey orders, failure to respond to attacks on civilians, or inadequate equipment. Although the Mission had encountered setbacks, attempts to undermine its legacy were ill-conceived, misleading and irresponsible.

51. Despite the progress made, many challenges remained. In that regard, her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish a new peacekeeping mission in Haiti to continue to assist the Government in its efforts to strengthen public institutions, the rule of law, police capacity and human rights. As the Mission was gradually phased out, the Organization must acknowledge its achievements and apply lessons learned and best practices identified. The General Assembly must allocate the resources necessary to enable the responsible and orderly liquidation of MINUSTAH, taking into account the situation on the ground. MINUJUSTH must also receive adequate funds to ensure the full implementation of its mandated tasks and programmatic activities, including community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects.

52. **Mr. Chavarri Cabello** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, in line with its historic commitment to ensuring the stability and welfare of the Haitian people, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was actively engaging in bilateral cooperation with the Haitian authorities in order to support the development and political and social stability of a free and sovereign Haiti.

53. While MINUSTAH had increased stability in Haiti since its launch in 2004, continued efforts were required to strengthen the rule of law and public institutions in the country. In that regard, his delegation was paying close attention to the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on the budget performance and financing of MINUSTAH and looked forward to reviewing the proposed budget for MINUJUSTH at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. During the transition to MINUJUSTH, adequate logistical and budgetary resources must be provided to ensure the continuation of quick-impact projects and other initiatives aimed at building the capacities of the Haitian National Police and strengthening key justice institutions in Haiti, which had contributed significantly to the Mission's success to date. Cooperation mechanisms must also be strengthened in order to support a successful transition from emergency humanitarian interventions to development-oriented programmes. In that connection, planned reductions in peacekeeping budgets must not affect existing programmes in Haiti, and the Committee must ensure that MINUSTAH and MINUJUSTH had adequate resources to fulfil their mandates.

54. **Ms. Nikodijević** (Serbia) said that the role of UNMIK was of critical importance to her country. Because of the lack of inter-ethnic trust in Kosovo and the region, the Mission's presence and status-neutral approach, based on Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), were indispensable to the implementation of the agreements reached between Belgrade and Pristina in the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue. In view of the Mission's substantive role in preserving long-term stability in the province, its mandate should be maintained and the scope of its activities enhanced. Her delegation agreed with the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General in his report on UNMIK to the Security Council (S/2017/95) on the need to ensure that UNMIK had appropriate resources to address current and emerging challenges, including the fragile reconciliation process and the evolving threat of violent extremism.

55. The United Nations must take a proactive approach to the question of Kosovo and Metohija. The recurring tendency to marginalize the Mission within the United Nations and reduce its personnel and financial capacities was counter-intuitive and detrimental in view of the ongoing challenges in the field. Increasing the visibility of UNMIK on the ground would enhance the readiness of Serbs and other non-Albanians to participate in the implementation of the agreements emanating from the European Union-facilitated dialogue and encourage the long-term normalization of relations between Belgrade and

Pristina, in line with the objectives outlined in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report (A/71/759).

56. The reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on UNMIK provided a solid basis for negotiations on that agenda item. Serbia supported the implementation of programmatic activities and concrete projects in line with mandated objectives across all peacekeeping missions. Notwithstanding the welcome increase in the Mission's budget proposed by the Secretary-General, in the light of the complex political and security situation in the province, additional increases should be considered with a view to enhancing programmatic activities and confidence-building projects designed to strengthen the rule of law, human rights and reconciliation among communities.

57. The numerous ongoing challenges in the field had been highlighted in the Secretary-General's quarterly reports on UNMIK to the Security Council and the memorandum of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights following his mission to Kosovo in February 2017, in which he had expressed concern at the deeply ingrained ethnic divisions 18 years after the conflict. The substantive component of UNMIK, including its personnel, must therefore be enhanced, in particular to enable the implementation of projects aimed at ensuring the sustainable return of internally displaced persons, one of the Mission's main tasks. Only 1.9 per cent of internally displaced persons had returned permanently to Kosovo and Metohija since June 1999; less than 30 per cent of them were Serbs, and more than 200,000 internally displaced persons still lived in the central part of Serbia, while the other 17,000 were displaced within Kosovo and Metohija itself. In his report (A/71/759), the Secretary-General had emphasized the importance of facilitating the return and integration of internally displaced persons in the context of programmatic activities to enhance reconciliation among communities.

58. The high incidence of attacks against minority communities in Kosovo and Metohija, of which there had been more than 8,000 since 1999, demonstrated the need to strengthen the Mission's personnel and programmatic capacities in areas related to the human rights of non-Albanian communities. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/71/759), the United Nations continuously assessed the impact on the ground of changes in the configuration of other international actors. Given the implications of those changes for the Mission's ability to fulfil its mandate, some of its components must be strengthened.

59. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposals to retain existing posts and establish new ones within UNMIK. However, given the anticipated increase in the workload related to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the drastic reduction in European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) staff from 8 to 3, more than one position of United Nations police officer should be established to perform functions related to INTERPOL. Adequate personnel capacities were essential for ensuring cooperation between UNMIK and INTERPOL in a status-neutral manner.

60. Serbia did not understand the Advisory Committee's request for the Secretary-General to provide additional justification for retaining three existing posts: one Chief Legal Affairs Officer post (D-1), one D-1 post in the Office of Community Support and Facilitation and one P-4 post in the Mitrovica Regional Office. That recommendation had been made in respect of UNMIK alone and, if applied across all peacekeeping missions, would result in requests for justification of every existing post. Long-standing vacancies in the Mission must be filled expeditiously, as recommended by the Advisory Committee. In that connection, her delegation would request the Secretariat to provide a table listing the vacant positions, the dates when they had become vacant, and the dates on which the related recruitment processes had begun.

61. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic) said that MINUJUSTH would be mandated to strengthen the capacities of national institutions in Haiti in order to ensure that the Government was in a position to assume its full responsibilities after the transition. Haiti was prepared to build on the political stability achieved, as evidenced by the success of its recent presidential elections and the end of the transition phase.

62. The Dominican Republic expected that MINUJUSTH would work with the Government to strengthen institutional capacities, particularly in the areas of the rule of law, police and human rights, and underscored its commitment to supporting Haiti in those efforts. In that connection, the President of his country had engaged in productive discussions with the new President of Haiti that had focused on social, economic and environmental initiatives of mutual importance to both countries.

63. His country concurred with the views expressed by the Advisory Committee on the need to support the Secretary-General in ensuring that necessary financial resources were provided to continue assisting Haiti.

The Dominican Republic supported the vision of the Haitian authorities for a peaceful, just, stable and prosperous Haiti.

64. **Ms. Vásquez Islame** (Chile) said that the focus on the link between security and development as a means of achieving sustainable peace had been a cornerstone of MINUSTAH since its establishment. The continuation of United Nations support for Haiti was critical at the current juncture. Her delegation agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to ensure a responsible transition to MINUJUSTH, anchored in the achievements of the previous 13 years and the commitment of the international community.

65. Adequate financing must continue to be provided for quick-impact projects and community violence reduction programmes, which had played a critical role in consolidating stability and helping the people of Haiti, including through initiatives aimed at improving access to water and sanitation. In order to preserve the gains of the Mission, the Committee must ensure the predictable, flexible and efficient provision of resources to enable an effective transition to MINUJUSTH, taking into account the situation on the ground and the need to avoid security gaps.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.